

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7605
INFO AMEMBASSY BERN
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG
AMEMBASSY PARIS
JMEMBASSY ROME 3441
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
USMISSION NATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L THE HAGUE 0896

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PGOV, BBAK, UINV, NL
SUBJ: LOCKHEED AND THE PRINCE

REF: THE HAGUE 788

1. "LOCKHEED COMMITTEE," AS DUTCH COMMISSION OF INQUIRY IS BECOMING KNOWN HERE, HAS BEGUN WORK. THREE MEMBEFS OF COMMISSION INTERVIEWED PRINCE AT SOSSTDIJK PALACE FEBRUARY 18 JUST PRIOR TO DEPARTURE OF ROYAL FAMILY FOR ANNUAL WINTER HOLIDAY AT LECH IN AUSTRIA. NO INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE REGARDING SESSION.

2. DUTCH PRESS CONTINUES TO GIVE HEAVY PLAY TO STORY, WITH PAPERS OFTEN RUNNING CONTRADICTORY ACCOUNTS. FOR FIRST TIME ONE DUTCH NEWSPAPER, REPORTING ON ITS CONTACTS WITH CHURCH COMMITTEE STAFF MEMBERS, HAS CARRIED STORY THAT FORMER LOCKHEED VICE PRESIDENT
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DENT KOTCHIAN TESTIFIED "IN SO MANY WORDS" IN EXECUTIVE SESSION THAT HE HAD SPOKEN TO PRINCE ABOUT RECEIPT OF LOCKHEED PAYMENTS.

STORY GOES ON TO SAY THAT COMMITTEE STAFFERS ARE CONVINCED THAT PAYMENTS WERE MADE AND THAT KOTCHIAN'S TESTIMONY IS SUPPORTED THROUGHOUT BY LOCKHEED DOCUMENTS AND THE HAUSER DIARY. WE HAVE HEARD FROM MFA SOURCE THAT DUTCH EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON HAS ALSO REPORTED THAT CHURCH COMMITTEE STAFF IS ABSOLUTELY CONVINCED THAT PRINCE WAS PAID BY LOCKHEED.

3. COMMISSION OF INQUIRY HAS NAMED A STAFF DIRECTOR (HE WILL ALSO ACT AS PRESS SPOKESMAN) AND A FIVE MAN STAFF AND HAS SET UP OFFICES IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (ACROSS STREET FROM EMBASSY). NEXT STEPS IN INVESTIGATION ARE UNCLEAR, WITH SOME NEWSPAPERS REPORTING THAT COMMISSION MAY VISIT SWITZERLAND THIS WEEK AND OTHER PAPERS HEADLINING STORIES ABOUT RISK OF ARREST BY SWISS IF COMMISSION TRIES PURSUE INVESTIGATION. A WASHINGTON VISIT SEEMS LIKELY, BUT WE HAVE NO IDEA OF TIMING.

4. MEANWHILE WITH PRINCE OFF SKIING, HIS SUPPORTERS HAVE LAUNCHED A CAMPAIGN ON HIS BEHALF. ONE GROUP HAS PRINTED 100,000 DECALS SAYING "WE MAINTAIN THE FULLEST CONFIDENCE IN PRINCE BERNHARD." DUTCH VETERANS ORGANIZATION HAS WRITTEN OPEN LETTER TO AMBASSADOR CALLING ATTACK ON THE PRINCE AN ATTACK ON DUTCH PEOPLE, QUESTIONING MOTIVES OF SENATOR CHURCH AND WONDERING WHY "HIS SUPERIORS" LET HIM DO IT.
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